



# University of Alberta Students' Union

## 2011 - 2012 Annual Report



The 2011/2012 year was one of building capacity and pushing the ball forward on many on-the-go projects. Most of the work in this report reflects the combined effort of nearly 200 full and part-time staff, over 800 volunteers, a provincial and federal lobby group and its staff, 32 student councilors, and members of the University and broader community. There are very few items in this report that are worked on in isolation and without the consideration of the impact each item has for the 30 000 undergraduate students at the University of Alberta.

I would also like to acknowledge that much of the work in this report is a continuation of the efforts of executives and staff that came before us and it is important to recognize their contributions. Because of the one-year mandate that our Executives and some staff face, it is very easy for many to forget that each year is part of a much larger story. Some of the "wins" we see today are because of the efforts of student leaders years earlier and only now coming to fruition. For example, the relatively low tuition increase we saw this year is a result of successful lobbying of past student leaders to create a provincial regulation that mandates CPI limits to tuition increases. With that in mind, this report reflects the 2011/2012 year's contribution to moving the ball forward for students at the University of Alberta. I wish the best to the current 2012-13 Executive and look forward to seeing what the future holds for the University of Alberta Students' Union.

Best of luck this year,

Rory Tighe  
President 2011/2012

Emerson Csorba  
VP Academic  
2011/2012

Colten Yamagishi  
VP Student Life  
2011/2012

Farid Iskandar  
VP External  
2011/2012

Andy Cheema  
VP Operations &  
Finance  
2011/2012



*business owner | service provider | student advocate | building operator*

Suite 2-900 Students' Union Building, University of Alberta Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2J7  
T: 780-492-4236 F: 780-492-4643 W: [www.su.ualberta.ca](http://www.su.ualberta.ca)



*This annual report—part of the Students' Union's framework for remaining accountable to students—is intended to provide students with an overview of the activities of their Students' Union over the 2011–2012 academic year.*

For a relatively small organization, we do a lot of different things. To help readers, we have broken down this report into several major areas: Advocacy and Representation, Services, Business and Lease Operations, Building Operations, Programming and Venues, Communications, Governance and Management, and Finances. Each section stands on its own, so you can navigate the report more easily.

## ADVOCACY & REPRESENTATION

The first responsibility of any students' union is to advocate for and represent students to administration, government, and the community at large. From lobbying on copyright reform to encouraging students to vote, the Students' Union had an active year in:

### Provincial Election Get Out the Vote Campaign

The Students' Union worked with its partner associations at the Universities of Lethbridge and Calgary to encourage students to vote in the last provincial election. At the University of Alberta, we signed up thousands of students who pledged to vote and followed that up on Election Day with a reminder to vote. This campaign led to a real and significant increase in the number of students voting. We continue to advocate for changes to residency rules to make it easier for students to decide where they live for the purpose of voting.

*“From lobbying on copyright reform to encouraging students to vote, the Students' Union had an active year”*

### Fall Reading Week

Work continued toward the implementation of a reading break during the Fall Semester. We worked closely with the Dean of Students and the Registrar to review scheduling options and their impact. We hope to bring the Fall Reading Week proposal through University governance for formal approval in 2012–13.

### Advocacy and Lobby Training

We developed a training program for Faculty Associations and interested students to increase their advocacy skills. This included the creation of a training curriculum for students interested in lobbying politicians on student specific issues.

### CRAM

We worked with the University to host the Canadian Roundtable on Academic Materials. Held online, the conference brought together bookstore, students and publishers to talk about the future of academic materials.

### Undergraduate Research Symposium

Working with the Undergraduate Research Initiative, we hosted the University of Alberta's first Undergraduate Research Symposium. This event brought together student researchers from a variety of disciplines and gave them the opportunity to highlight their work. We hope this becomes an annual event.

### Copyright Legislation

After years of advocacy done by the Students' Union and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, students saw a number of positive changes to the Copyright Act. The most important improvement is the inclusion of educational use as protected under fair dealing. We continue to advocate for changes to the import regulations connected to the Copyright Act to reduce academic material costs for students.

### Spring/Summer UPass

In a referendum, students resoundingly approved the

extension of the U-Pass to those studying in the Spring/Summer terms. We are now working with Edmonton Transit on implementation in 2013.

## SERVICES

The Students' Union offers members a wide range of services that exist to support students' academic, financial, and personal needs. Our services unit also provides job and professional development opportunities to more than 50 staff and 800 volunteers. No other student association in the country offers the range and depth of services we do.

### Centre for Student Development

The Centre for Student Development offers a variety of programs to help support students to, through and beyond University. Orientation 2011 was well attended and achieved a higher retention rate than in past years. We had a high level of satisfaction from attendees, and 95% of surveyed students surveyed after Orientation said they were happy with their Orientation experience.

In collaboration with the Alumni Association, the CSD launched the After U program, a series of workshops and events targeted at students through their transition out of University. Over 250 students attended After U events in the first year of the program.

*“Our services unit also provides job and professional development opportunities to more than 50 staff and 800 volunteers.”*

### InfoLink

2011–2012 was a busy year for InfoLink, with the service adopting a more holistic approach to helping students. The service began to actively connect visitors to student life resources, such as the upgraded Volunteer Registry, and introduced new academic supports, such as the well-received SU Tutors training program. InfoLink served over 113,000 students campus wide.

### Peer Support Centre

The Peer Support Centre moved to the second floor of SUB, closer to other wellness-related services. Partly as a result of this move, we saw visits to the PSC increase by approximately 100%.

### Student Group Services

Student Group Services implemented BearsDen, an online involvement tool for student groups and organizations on campus. BearsDen helps streamline the registration and student group management processes. In 2011–2012, there were more than 420 active student groups.

We have worked to make the service more responsive to the needs of both student groups and the University administration through improved procedures and an increase in administrative support resources.

### Safewalk

Safewalk had a successful year, with usage increasing by over 20% to 1300 walks through the year. Safewalk also provided additional optional training opportunities for volunteers, based on the assessed volunteer needs.

Safewalk also conducted a student survey and received over 4500 responses. This feedback will be incorporated into programming changes in the coming year.

### Student Financial Aid Information Centre

SFAIC provided a tremendous amount of direct financial support to students. A revised and expanded SU Awards program gave out 78 awards totalling \$83,000, and the Access Fund disbursed over \$573,000 in needs-based grants to more than 260 students.

SFAIC also overhauled their money management series of programs. Some capital work was also done, modifying the reception area to accommodate the relocation of the Campus Food Bank to a space adjoining the SFAIC offices.

### Student Ombudservice

Over the past year, the SOS has continued to serve students by supporting them through the university's administrative and disciplinary processes, while also acting

as an advocate for fairness. The OmbudService continues to benefit from the experience of University-employed permanent staff, while providing SU term staff a unique opportunity to grow their talents. This also ensures a balance between university and student perspectives in the work that the Ombudservice does.

### Sustain SU

Volunteer engagement increased within Sustain SU, as a result of a shift in operating philosophy that placed more responsibility for decision-making and involvement with the senior volunteers.

Sustain SU held two Student Sustainability Summits, hosted numerous sustain exchanges, saved over 15000 wasted plates through the reusable dish program and worked on many more exciting initiatives.

### Emerging Leaders Program

The Students' Union partnered with Residence Services and the Dean of Students Office to plan and implement the Emerging Leaders Program pilot. This pilot program was initially targeted at services student staff, residence services student staff and executives of student groups on campus.

The Emerging Leaders Program is based on the Social Change Model of leadership. Throughout the interactive sessions, the participants developed their understanding of leadership through exploring topics such as citizenship, common-purpose, collaboration, controversy with civility, consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment.

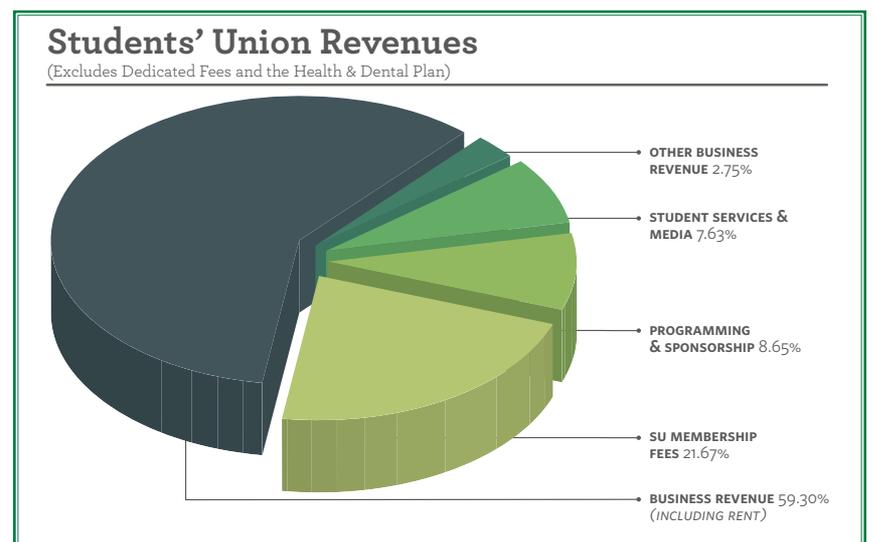
We had 18 students complete the entire program for which they received a non-credit certificate and around 30 students participating throughout the year. This program is being expanded for the 2012–2013 year to provide access to any interested students on campus.

## BUSINESS & LEASE OPERATIONS

Students' Union-operated businesses generate revenue (helping to keep student fees lower) and provide over a hundred part-time job opportunities for students. They also help students affect the campus market—course-packs which are produced by the Students' Union and sold at the Bookstore help keep the cost of course materials down and their currency and relevance up. In addition to its own businesses, the Students' Union leases space to a number of retail and food tenants.

Profits from business and lease operations go directly to offset the cost of our advocacy, student services, and building operations. Without this contribution, providing services at the level we do would require Students' Union fees to be approximately \$50 higher than they are currently.

For 2011–12, the combined net revenue (profit) from business and lease operations increased approximately 5%, from \$1.53M to \$1.61M. These improved numbers, however, obscure a more complicated picture in which some units saw major improvements while others struggled under increased competitive pressures.



*“Profits from business and lease operations go directly to offset the cost of our advocacy, student services, and building operations.”*

In the retail segment (SUBmart, SUBprint, SUBtitles, and the Postal Outlet), sales were down approximately 3%, but net revenue was up 86%, from \$147K to \$275K. This improvement in the bottom line was driven by the elimination of expensive SUBprint equipment leases. These leases will need to be replaced in the next few years, so

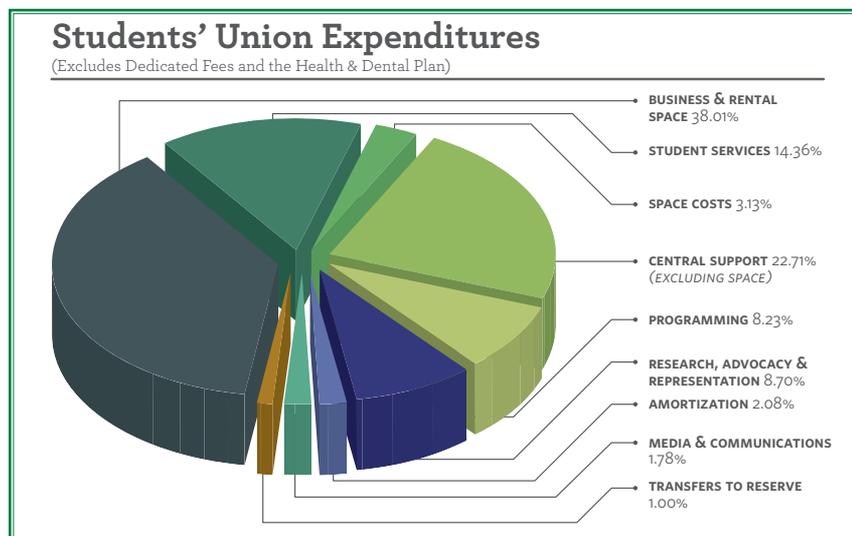
the current windfall is not expected to persist. The ongoing decline in overall revenue reflects, in part, a shift to digital media for course materials as well as copyright-related uncertainties in the coursepack business.

Weak net revenue performance in SUBmart is being addressed in the current year through changes in store organization, product lineup, pricing strategy, and staff organization.

Food and beverage units have similarly mixed results. Overall revenues increased by less than 1% to \$2.78M. Staff costs, however, went up by 12%, leading to a reduction in net revenue to \$220K (from \$294K the previous year).

Juicy and Cram Dunk continue to decline, and we plan a re-conceptualization of these operations in conjunction with the SUB renovation project. L'express continues to perform well, with modestly increasing gross revenues, but net revenues were down in 2011–12 due to higher staff costs.

RATT revenue rose on increased food sales and flat alcohol sales, and net revenue was up. Dewey's revenue and mar-



gins were almost identical to the prior year.

Overall food court revenues were down 2% from 2010–11, with significant declines in coffee revenue. This reflects a much more competitive environment for coffee sales over the last few years, as Aramark has added many new coffee outlets to campus and, in particular, to CAB.

In 2013, the SUB food court leases will expire. In anticipation of this event, we expect to issue a request for proposal to potential tenants in late winter 2013.

## BUILDING OPERATIONS

The Students' Union Building has traditionally served as the 'living room' of campus, a place for students that is comfortable, accessible, and friendly. SUB acts as a hub for student services, for student groups, and for the social and study needs of students.

Our excellent facilities staff continued to provide a clean, safe environment for students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. As always, when doing cleaning or maintenance, sustainability is a key consideration: We use environment-friendly cleaning products and are well-known on campus for our inventory of recycled and repurposed building materials. Much of the furniture that the SU uses is original building equipment from 1967 or from the 1993 renovation—we just refurbish and refresh it when needed.

BOMABest certification was formally approved for our building. SUB rates at level 2 out of 4, and one of our goals is to work with the University to move up a level over the next two years.

*“The Students' Union Building has traditionally served as the ‘living room’ of campus, a place for students that is comfortable, accessible, and friendly.”*

We worked to make the building friendlier and more responsive to students needs. In the summer of 2011, we designed and installed power towers on the main floor of SUB, to make it a little easier for you to find a plug-in for your laptop or mobile. We also installed two water-bottle filling stations, which have been used to fill over 170,000 bottles so far.

We conducted a detailed feasibility study on the potential to renovate SUB and improve the quality of space on the lower level of the building. After seeing the

feasibility study, Students' Council approved a referendum asking students for a capital fee to fund facility improvements; this referendum passed in March. We are now developing the design reports required for student consultation in the fall, prior to Students' Council determining whether to give final approval to the project.

## PROGRAMMING AND VENUES

The SU's Programming and Venues department hosts approximately 70 events, large and small, throughout the year, from Week of Welcome to Antifreeze to the SU Awards Night. Through our venues—SUBstage, Dinwoodie Lounge, and Myer Horowitz Theatre—and through our events, thousands of students, staff, and community members have been entertained, educated, and engaged.

Week of Welcome saw excellent weather and attendance at most events, with Quad activities seeing their best turnout to date. Antifreeze, movie nights, and the Campus Cup dodgeball tournament were all successful and saw participation rates among students increase.

In February, we recaptured the Guinness World Record for the Largest Dodgeball Game with 4979 participants. The gold team won, continuing their unbeaten streak.

The Students' Union's main venues of Dinwoodie and Myer Horowitz continue to see an increased in activity levels. Event revenues at Dinwoodie increased 66% and Horowitz revenues increased 18%. The Myer Horowitz Theatre continues to be a venue of choice with the external community and was almost

completely booked every weekend throughout the year. External events helped subsidize the campus programming that we do and offer a diverse array of programming to students in their own backyard—from comedians to concerts and lectures.

*“The SU's Programming and Venues department hosts approximately 70 events, large and small, throughout the year”*

Finally, the Programming and Venues department played the key role in helping the Students' Union co-host the annual national conference of AMICCUS-C, the professional organization for staff working in student associations. The conference was a great success, with excellent attendance and programming.

## MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Communication with students—our members—is a top priority for the Students' Union. Letting students know what we're doing is critical to our success. Communication is also essential to remaining responsive to you, our members.

In 2011–12, we continued developing our digital media assets. SUTV was expanded to the University Bookstore and the OneCard office, and we added new digital signage initiatives, including the Departures Board and the Services Board. We also explored developing digital kiosks for potential use in areas of campus that lack both a significant SU presence and without the foot traffic to justify a staffed InfoLink booth.

The annual student survey continued to generate excellent response rates (over 7000 responses), and has begun to provide the level of trend data essential for the effective management of the Students' Union.

The SU also began using social media more aggressively to reach out to students, from creating video blogs to using Facebook and Twitter to promote events.

*“Letting students know what we're doing is critical to our success.”*

Marketing's Studio staff also contributed countless printed pieces, including logos, posters, banners and brochures, all in support of a wide variety of SU initiatives. Some of the highlights included identity work for

Discover Governance, rebranding of ECOS to Sustain SU, and a complete identity for the annual national conference of AMICCUS-C, among others.

## GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Students' Union takes governance issues—transparency, fairness, and responsiveness—extremely seriously.

Part of ensuring good governance is a shared understanding of purpose and plan. To that end, the Students' Union adopted a Strategic Plan and developed a strategic management process to help ensure we kept to our commitments. (This report itself is a mandated part of that process.)

We saw a substantial increase in the number of Executive election candidates, including many more (but still under-represented) female students. For the third straight year, students elected a background-diverse but all-male Executive. It is an SU goal this year to increase female candidates running for Executive office.

The new Discover Governance department continued to grow, producing reports on students involved in University governance, helping to recruit and educate new representatives, and providing support services to both individual students and to student groups on governance issues.

*“the Students' Union adopted a Strategic Plan and developed a strategic management process to help ensure we kept to our commitments”*

The Physical Activity and Wellness (PAW) Centre Agreement between the University, the Students' Union, and the Graduate Students' Association was finally completed. This agreement enshrines all of the key principles from the PAW referendum, and ensures ongoing student involvement in program and strategy for the PAW Centre.

We continued to involve the SU more in the pedagogical life of the University, hosting many CSL-driven projects. From the Farmer's Market to Sustain SU programs to upcoming changes to food labelling, these student projects have helped us figure out how to move forward in the direction students want.

Senior staff at the Students' Union also implemented new annual transition and professional development programs. For an organization that undergoes so much annual turnover in leadership positions, it is essential that we do the best possible job providing orientation, skills training, and historical context to our new student leaders and service heads, and we continue those efforts.

A Sustainability Audit, and an internal response outlining the next two years initiatives, was completed. The Students' Union sustainability-related activities will be based on promoting sustainability practices, training staff on sustainability issues, developing appropriate tracking mechanisms, and implementing appropriate policies to enhance sustainability.

## FINANCES

We are audited annually by an external Auditor, and work with our Audit Committee on our financial statements. Management does not sit on the Audit Committee. KPMG has approved the financial statements as a fair representation of the Students' Union's finances.

We have included here the two most important statements, the Statement of Financial Position (a balance sheet) and the Statement of Operations (a version of an income statement). These are very general overviews; the full Financial Statements contain much more detail on operational finances, and can be found on the SU website.

For the non-accountants among our members, it is important to note that the Net Revenue listed on the Statement of Operations does not represent the annual surplus or cash flow available to general operations of the Students' Union. Due to the way amortization, building loans, restricted fund allocations, and capital purchases are accounted for, the actual increase in the accumulated surplus is much smaller than implied by the Statement of Operations.

*“Our balance sheet for all operations, however, continued to improve, as our capital assets and other reserves increased in value by approximately \$586,000.”*

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
APRIL 30, 2012 WITH COMPARATIVE FIGURES FOR 2011**

	2012	2011
<b>ASSETS (Current)</b>		
Cash	\$3,105,498	\$5,303,904
Accounts receivable	500,556	964,907
Accrued interest receivable	100,005	82,684
Merchandise inventories	348,796	365,124
Prepaid expenses and deposits	399,992	87,872
	<u>4,454,847</u>	<u>6,804,491</u>
<b>ASSETS (Held)</b>		
Investments	6,250,356	3,290,869
Capital assets	6,981,049	6,964,968
	<u>\$17,686,252</u>	<u>\$17,060,328</u>
<b>LIABILITIES (Current)</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$1,024,740	\$1,019,339
Deferred revenue and deposits	1,578,908	1,233,498
Current portion of long-term debt	299,058	310,539
	<u>2,902,706</u>	<u>2,563,376</u>
<b>LIABILITIES (Other)</b>		
Long-term debt	-	299,058
	<u>\$2,902,706</u>	<u>\$2,862,434</u>
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>		
Invested in capital assets	\$6,681,991	\$6,355,371
Externally restricted funds	992,701	681,986
Student Involvement Fund	3,102,522	3,058,049
Internally restricted funds	1,602,761	1,643,199
Unrestricted funds	2,333,321	2,333,400
	<u>14,713,296</u>	<u>14,072,005</u>
Cumulative net unrealized gains on investments	70,250	125,889
	<u>14,783,546</u>	<u>14,197,894</u>
	<u>\$17,686,252</u>	<u>\$17,060,328</u>

For 2011-12, on an unrestricted cash basis, the Students' Union essentially broke even, netting a change to the Unrestricted Funds Reserve of -\$79. This is a reduction from last year's increase of \$277,775 (this is a number restated from last year's reported figures, in accordance with recommendations from our auditors.)

Our balance sheet for all operations, however, continued to improve, as our capital assets and other reserves increased in value by approximately \$586,000.

Our statements have been restated this year, in response to a request from our auditors to modify how student health and dental fees are handled. We concurred with the auditors' recommendation, as it improves the relevancy and accuracy of our financial reporting.

**IT'S YOUR STUDENTS' UNION!**

Student engagement and effective representation are central to the Students' Union. The SU's future depends on you: Without students willing to step into leadership positions or without a student body willing to voice its concerns, the Students' Union cannot succeed.

Get involved in your University! You can join a club, volunteer for one of our student services, or run for elected office. There's much to learn, and great experiences to gain, by becoming an active member of your community. This University runs on your energy, your enthusiasm, and your ideas.



**SU BY THE NUMBERS**

Number of Volunteers at Orientation:	537
Total number of visits to InfoLink locations:	112,909
Number of exams in the exam registry:	5,966
Total number of visits to SFAIC:	10,257
Number of dodgeballs ordered for Break the Record:	1800
Number of adverts in the Housing Registry:	3,256
Number of searches of those ads:	300,483
Number of Sustain SU reusable plates and cups borrowed:	22,527
Number of jobs posted to Jobkin:	975
Number of different course packs printed at SUBprint:	509
Total course packs printed:	23,570
Total amount of consignment cheques issued to students by SUBtitles:	\$410,980
Value of grants distributed by Access Fund:	\$579,126
Average size of each grant:	\$2129
Number of walks made by Safewalk:	over 1300
Number of unique visits to SU Website:	816,319

**THE STUDENTS' UNION, THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS  
YEAR ENDED APRIL 30, 2012 WITH COMPARATIVE FIGURES FOR 2011**

	2012					2011				
	CAPITAL ASSET FUND	EXTERNALLY RESTRICTED FUNDS	STUDENT INVOLVEMENT FUND	UNRESTRICTED AND INTERNALLY RESTRICTED FUNDS	TOTAL OPERATIONS	CAPITAL ASSET FUND	EXTERNALLY RESTRICTED FUNDS	STUDENT INVOLVEMENT FUND	UNRESTRICTED AND INTERNALLY RESTRICTED FUNDS	TOTAL OPERATIONS
<b>GENERAL REVENUE</b>										
Student Fees (includes Health and Dental Plan)	\$-	\$2,211,670	\$-	\$6,074,385	\$8,286,055	\$-	\$2,381,406	\$-	\$5,726,358	\$8,107,764
Interest and dividends	-	-	81,099	163,122	244,221	-	16,817	7,655	160,968	185,440
SUBTOTAL: General Revenue	-	2,211,670	81,099	6,237,507	8,530,276	-	2,398,223	7,655	5,887,326	8,293,204
<b>DEPARTMENTAL REVENUE</b>										
Business Activities	-	-	-	5,724,651	5,724,651	-	-	-	5,737,979	5,737,979
Programming and Event Activities	-	-	-	664,834	664,834	-	-	-	652,212	652,212
Student Service Activities	-	-	-	554,053	554,053	-	-	-	609,443	609,443
Central Support and Space Activities (including SUB)	-	-	-	536,139	536,139	-	-	-	521,404	521,404
Representation Activities	-	-	-	105,500	105,500	-	-	-	121,635	121,635
Reserve Activities	-	-	31,000	259,477	290,477	-	450	-	167,242	167,692
SUBTOTAL: Departmental Revenue	-	-	31,000	7,844,654	7,875,654	-	450	-	7,809,915	7,810,365
<b>TOTAL GENERAL AND DEPARTMENTAL REVENUE</b>	-	2,211,670	112,099	14,082,161	16,405,930	-	2,398,673	7,655	13,697,241	16,103,569
<b>DEPARTMENTAL EXPENSES</b>										
Business Activities	-	-	-	4,116,086	4,116,086	-	-	-	4,208,245	4,208,245
Programming and Event Activities	-	-	-	749,845	749,845	-	-	-	752,592	752,592
Student Service Activities	-	-	-	1,365,728	1,365,728	-	-	-	1,243,328	1,243,328
Central Support and Space Activities (including SUB)	-	-	-	2,252,405	2,252,405	-	-	-	2,209,195	2,209,195
Representation Activities	-	-	-	638,893	638,893	-	-	-	588,490	588,490
Reserve Activities	-	1,900,955	104,648	4,122,293	6,127,896	-	2,116,786	27,295	3,683,235	5,827,316
SUBTOTAL: Departmental Expenses	-	1,900,955	104,648	13,245,250	15,250,853	-	2,116,786	27,295	12,685,085	14,829,166
<b>GENERAL EXPENSES</b>										
General Amortization										
Interest on Long-term debt	507,447	-	-	-	507,447	500,666	-	-	-	500,666
Amortization of premiums and discounts on investments	-	-	-	28,504	28,504	-	-	-	46,883	46,883
Realized loss (gain) on disposal of investments	-	-	3,336	8,214	11,550	-	-	-	8,018	8,018
SUBTOTAL: General Expenses	507,447	-	(37,022)	43,361	513,786	500,666	-	11,956	38,083	550,705
<b>TOTAL GENERAL AND DEPARTMENTAL EXPENSES</b>	507,447	1,900,955	67,626	13,288,611	15,764,639	500,666	2,116,786	39,251	12,723,168	15,379,871
<b>NET REVENUE (EXPENSES)</b>	<b>\$(507,447)</b>	<b>\$310,715</b>	<b>\$44,473</b>	<b>\$793,550</b>	<b>\$641,291</b>	<b>\$(500,666)</b>	<b>\$281,887</b>	<b>\$(31,596)</b>	<b>\$974,073</b>	<b>\$723,698</b>